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Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in Geneva, says UNPROFOR withdrawal from Croatia could affect peace-keeping presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina remains generally quiet despite fighting in Bihac pocket; 21 UNHCR, ICRC and UNPROFOR flights land at Sarajevo.

+ Special Adviser Gharekhan briefs Security Council on Burundi; says situation remains fraglie, citing confrontations regarding position of Prime Minister.

+ Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNIFIL for six months; says Force contributes to stability in southern Lebanon, despite being prevented from implementing its mandate.

+ Documents affirming Iraqi recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity deposited in official United Nations archives.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met yesterday in Geneva with senior United Nations officials to consider military and political aspects of the situation in the former Yugoslavia. They discussed the possible consequences of a lifting of the arms embargo against the Bosnian parties, and of Croatia's decision not to accept a renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva today, the Secretary-General said a lifting of the arms embargo would lead to a withdrawal of French, British, Spanish and Russian peace-keeping contingents from UNPROFOR. He expressed concern that withdrawal of the Force from Croatia would affect the peace-keeping presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. United Nations planning would now have to take into consideration the possibility of a withdrawal from both countries, and the impact on UNPROFOR's relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

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The Secretary-General went on to say that UNPROFOR's withdrawal from Croatia might also affect the cease-fire and economic agreements concluded by the parties there. The economic agreement signed on 2 December had already brought significant benefits to the Croatian Government and Croatian Serbs, he pointed out.

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There was an outbreak of fighting this morning around the town of Velika Kladusa in the Bihac pocket, a United Nations spokesman said today. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) reported 217 detonations and hundreds of small-arms rounds fired in one area. There were also some detonations around Bihac town itself.

However, the situation remained quiet elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were no cease-fire violations in Sarajevo, and a total of 21 flights -- operated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNPROFOR -- landed there today. Sectors South-West and North-East were calm and stable, although the Bosnian Government imposed some restrictions on UNPROFOR freedom of movement in the latter.

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Special Adviser to the Secretary-General Chinmaya Gharekhan today briefed the Security Council on developments in Burundi, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said that the situation there remained fragile, and that it was chacterized by confrontations regarding the position of the Prime Minister.

The spokesman noted that the briefing on Burundi was given at the request of the Council. He added that the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, had called attention to the very serious political and security situation in the country.

The Council last month expressed concern regarding violence in Burundi, saying it threatened to further destabilize the country and could endanger the stability of the sub-region. In a statement by its President on 22 December, the Council urged all sides to reject confrontational tactics, violence and extremism, and to work towards compromise and conciliation in a spirit of national unity.

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The mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should be extended for six months to 31 July, as requested by the Lebanese Government, according to the Secretary-General. In a report to the Security Council dated 23 January, he said the Force contributed to stability in southern Lebanon and to the protection of the area's inhabitants.

The situation in southern Lebanon remained tense and volatile, and UNIFIL continued to be prevented from implementing its mandate, the Secretary-General

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noted. Israel still occupied territory there, and its forces and their Lebanese auxiliaries continued to attack, and to be attacked by, armed groups opposed to the occupation. UNIFIL sought to limit the conflict and to protect civilians, and continued to patrol its area of deployment and to extend humanitarian assistance to those in need.

The Secretary-General called attention to the serious shortfall in funding for UNIFIL. At present, unpaid assessments exceeded $200 million. He appealed to all Member States to pay their assessments promptly, and to clear all arrears.

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The Secretary-General has deposited in the official archives of the United Nations documents affirming Iraq's recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Kuwait as endorsed by the provisions of Security Council resolution 833 (1993). The documents were transmitted to him by a letter from Iraq dated 12 November 1994.

The documents include: a letter, dated 12 November 1994, to the Secretary-General from the Iraqi Foreign Minister; a Declaration, dated 10 November 1994, issued by the National Assembly of Iraq; decree No. 200, dated 10 November 1994, of the Revolution Command Council of Iraq; and a copy of the official gazette of the Republic of Iraq, Alwaqai Aliraqiya, dated 10 November 1994.

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